

April 27, 2004

Mono County Planning Division
Attention: Intrawest Rodeo Grounds/June Lake
P.O. Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

RECEIVED
MAY 06 2004
MONO COUNTY PLANNING DEPT.
SOUTH COUNTY

Subject: Intrawest Rodeo Grounds Specific Plan,
June Lake, Mono County, California

At the recent scoping meeting on April 20, I was disappointed that meeting participants were unable to address serious problems with the Intrawest specific plans for the Rodeo Grounds. I am a permanent resident of June Lake who participated in the development of the June Lake Design Guidelines, am a member of the Executive Committee of Toiyabe Chapter of Sierra Club, and serve as education chair of the Range of Light Group of Sierra Club.

June Lake has a tourist-based economy, which strongly relies on the natural beauty of the area. A development of the size proposed by Intrawest cannot help but detract from the natural resources that bring many families and their tourist dollars (estimated at \$20 million annually) here. The Specific Plan should consider maintenance of vistas and open space.

I, along with the Toiyabe Chapter of Sierra Club, support the position of June Lake Advocates to provide responsible, community-based development that are within the guidelines of the June Lake Area Plan, the Mono County General Plan, and within the June Lake Design Guidelines. Design Guidelines demand that there be open space, that structures reflect the mountain community, with the maximum building footprint being no larger than the Heidelberg Inn. Guidelines also state that those who work here should be able to afford to live here.

Since there have been no amendments to the Mono County General Plan to raise height limits, increase density, and the PAOT, I suggest that the scoping process for the Rodeo Grounds Specific Plan start over with a design that is consistent with those plans. The alternative is to bring these issues before the Mono County Board of Supervisors, and to the voters, if necessary.

In addition to the positions stated in the letters from June Lake Advocates, Sierra Club ROL Group, CalTrans, and the California Department of Fish and Game, there are issues I would like to stress and see addressed in the final EIR. More information is needed before a project of this size can be implemented.

- **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS** of all development in the June Lake loop at buildout need to be addressed. Expansion plans for June Mountain are not yet available, but are believed to propose an increase of skier PAOT from 2,000 to 7,000. Since this expansion includes a gondola which will link the proposed development to the ski area, both projects should be considered together.
- **DENSITY:** Numbers of units need to be honestly addressed. A duplex or fourplex cannot be counted as a single unit. If readjustment for the faulty counting is considered, there are almost 1200 units proposed, and these figures don't take into account the number of condo-hotel units that are counted at a ratio where 2 units equal 1. At the scoping meeting Larry Johnston noted that single family units that occupy under an acre cannot have a "granny unit" over 400 sq. ft. In the proposal, these units are slated to be 800 sq. ft. Let's get all of these figures right!
- **WATER AND SEWAGE ISSUES:** There are conflicting statements issued by the June Lake PUD. We residents are asked every summer to reduce our water usage, as there isn't enough without conservation. Yet the PUD states that there are sufficient water resources for this development. The prospect of continued drought needs to be addressed so that there is a balance between water resources and use. What conservation practices are included in the development plan? Since the Lake and Snow Creek aren't sufficient for present residents and visitors, the only alternative is to pump groundwater or lower the level of June Lake. Studies for groundwater pumping need to be completed, with a maximum withdrawal from this source set that won't impact lake levels, springs, vegetation, and wildlife. The visual impacts of lower water levels upon June Lake need to be addressed; lower water levels may prevent swimming at the beach, as the water is already very shallow there. As part of our property taxes, present residents are currently paying for a water and sewer bond. With the upgrade, paid by present residents, Intrawest states that they will pay only for water and sewer hookups. They should be responsible for much of the costs of these upgrades.
- **SOIL DISTURBANCE:** Construction practices should eliminate any transport of sediments to surface waters. In addition, soil disturbance results in the introduction of many exotic plant species. Monitoring and removal of exotic species needs to be a part of the specific plan.
- **IMPACTS DURING CONSTRUCTION** must be addressed. Noise, visual impacts from construction debris, increased traffic, construction employee housing, soil, air and water pollution, impacts on wildlife all need to be considered.

- **LOSS OF HABITAT:** What affects one species impacts all species. Of great concern is the impact of this proposed development on resident and migratory deer herds. In the June Lake Highlands development plan, with only 37 lots, no way could be found to mitigate the impact of that development on the deer herd. This development, which is of much greater size, is adjacent to the Highlands. Considered together, the migration corridor will be Northshore Drive, with most of the bitterbrush food resource gone forever. Also to be considered within this corridor is future development of the Ronci property.
- **TRAIL ACCESS,** with trailhead parking, to Gull and the Snow Lakes needs to be addressed. The southern access to both trails may be eliminated by new roads into the development. An easement may be needed to preserve public access to USFS trails and public lands.
- **SAFETY:** The narrow roads within the June Lake loop are inadequate for the people who hike and bike on them. The developer should be responsible for creating a safe environment for the increased number of visitors that this project creates. The community volunteer fire department cannot support a development of this size. Intrust should be held to providing adequate emergency services and facilities to support this development.
- **SNOW REMOVAL:** How is this to be accomplished? It appears that most structures within areas 2-5 are sited with only 20 or 30 feet between buildings. There does not seem to be a plan for snow storage. If there is massive trucking to remove snow, with only 20 foot-wide roads within the development, there may not be sufficient width to accommodate snow removal or emergency vehicles during big storm events. The proposal only addresses a 20 year storm event; included should be storm events up to 100 years.
- **CULTURAL RESOURCES:** In my hikes in area near the Snow Lakes, I have found Native American artifacts (mostly obsidian flakes and broken points). Care must be taken to avoid any impacts on Indian sites that result from increased visitation.
- **MORE PEOPLE RELATED ISSUES:**
 1. People arrive here by cars: parking figures are considered only for the development, not the day usage that will take place. Are there plans for a year round shuttle service? Will the proposed gondola include usage by visitors other than residents or guests of the development?
 2. What percent of the development is planned for full time residency? The June Lake Plan specifically states that residents want those who work here to be able to live here, and that mostly empty rental units are unacceptable to this community.
 3. Will there be enough affordable housing available? This project appears to need more than the 60 units planned, and those units should include garages.

4. Can Intrawest preserve open spaces and vistas within this massive, concentrated development? The project site is clearly visible from the southern Snow Lake hiking trail, and may be visible from Oh! Ridge.
 5. The cost of all community infrastructure must be borne by Intrawest, with consideration for density at final buildout of the June Lake loop.
 6. Increased numbers of visitors as they recreate will impact the environment. Who will clean up litter, restore trampled lake and stream shorelines, and monitor water, air quality, and noise created by this project?
- **SUMMARY:** The economy of the June Lake community is dependent upon tourism. The vistas and scenery draw visitors intent on recreating here, rather than a commercial experience. Visitors do want some amenities that this project can provide. The community does not say NO to this development, but does ask HOW? In a recent survey by June Lake Advocates, 435 community members have responded, with more than 90% in favor of Intrawest following the community and county guidelines. The guidelines developed within the June Lake Area Plan, the Mono County General Plan, and the June Lake Design Guidelines address the delicate balance between preserving the community of June Lake and its great natural beauty with permitted development. Let's keep these standards, and require Intrawest to plan their development according to them.

I request that this project as it presently stands, be denied.

Sincerely,



Jean Dillingham
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